known as the Southern Ch'i. This had even shorter shrift than the Liu Sung. The founder died a little less than three years after mounting the throne and of his six descendants who held the imperial title only one reigned for more than two years and four died by violence. Domestic strife and war with one of the states of the North permitted little quiet. Again a general made an end of the dynasty (502) and founded a new one, the Liang.

The first monarch of the Liang, Hsiao Yen, known to posterity as Wu Ti (or, to distinguish him from the many others of the same appellation, Liang Wu Ti), was a distant connection of the rulers of the preceding dynasty. He held the throne until his death, in 549, or for nearly half a century. Frugal, an enemy of luxury and excess, and something of a scholar, he appears to have sought conscientiously the welfare of his realm. He reduced taxation, ordered the establishment of schools, and strove for peace. At first an ardent Confucianist, in late middle life he became a devout Buddhist. In his extreme old age (for he lived to be eighty-six) misfortunes overtook him. In the South, Annam revolted (in 541—but it was soon reconquered, the return of Chinese power beginning in 545), and a famous attempt to overwhelm the northern kingdom of Wei through the prolonged siege of the strategic city on the Han, later called Hsiangyang, failed because of the disastrous collapse of the dam which the attackers were building to drown out-the beleaguered. In the North a vassal prince rebelled and crossed the Yangtze, and the now feeble Liang Wu Ti died in penury in what was later to be known as Nanking.

Great confusion marked the next few years. The

rebel prince sought to establish a new dynasty, but was speedily slain. Violent struggles for the succession brought several members of the family of Hsiao Yen to the throne, but one after another these were quickly killed. In 557 the Liang dynasty is said officially to have ended, although a branch of the Hsiao family retained a precarious hold upon a section of the country until 589 and is known as the Hou Liang, or Later Liang (not to be confused with a Hou Liang of the tenth century).

The last Emperor of the Liang had been compelled to abdicate by one of Ms officials, Ch'en Pa-hsien, a descendant of a renowned statesman of the Han. Ch'en Pa-hsien established at the present Nanking -a dynasty called the Ch'en, but died about two years